

THE much-awaited outcome of the presidential election results clearly showed that the electorate has made an informed judgement as to who should govern the country for the next six years.

The country was replete with cut-outs of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa all over the country and this phenomenon was never experienced by the electorate. Even during late President Premadasa's time there were cut-outs but not on this scale. People began to wonder as to where the money had come from to erect such gigantic cut-outs. The main theme of the Opposition campaign gained ground because there were allegations of ill-gotten money by a handful of persons.

The cut-outs were required to provide an artificial boost to an otherwise degenerated image that emanated from the poor performance at the hustings in the provinces. The Provincial Council elections were conducted for the very purpose of gauging his electoral chances. The provincial electorate sent a clear message that he was on a losing streak. Yet President Rajapaksa was also gripped over the predicament that might befall him in March as a result of the Geneva human rights council deliberations.

President Rajapaksa felt that his popularity was sinking at an alarming rate and he thought, through his steamer roller majority and his blatant abuse of state resources and state terror and propaganda, that he could orchestrate an artificial election victory.

Even his ministers and confidants might not have been convinced that he could secure a victory, as were some of the public pronouncements. But he went ahead with the election, determined to win thinking that his main opponent would be Ranil Wickremesinghe. All strategies went awry with the emergence of President Maithripala Sirisena from within the camp backed by former president CBK, the UNP, JHU, SLMC, TNA and tacit support from the JVP.

The UNP camp was solidly behind the move to back Maithripala Sirisena, this was unexpected and the decision was ratified unanimously by the UNP Group of 20 and the working committee. Even Deputy Leader Sajith Premadasa threw his weight behind the campaign.

If President Rajapaksa had waited yet another two years, things would have been even more difficult as he

Cut-outs knocked out



During the campaigning period of the recent presidential elections several cut-outs of then incumbent President Mahinda Rajapaksa dominated several towns and cities across the country

was sure that March Geneva deliberations would target the Rajapaksas and the people around him and that would pave the way for desertions within the camp.

All in all, the election campaign was full of defections and disappointments for President Rajapaksa. President Rajapaksa would not have dreamt of an election if he had any hint of the scale of crossovers.

Was the election free and fair?

President Sirisena would have secured even more votes had there been a free and fair election. Rajapaksa brazenly abused state media and resources and turned a blind eye to thuggery. The

Opposition campaign faced several attacks by Rajapaksa acolytes. There was no free access to state media. The state media came under the supervision of the party apparatus and this has been going on for 10 years unabated. The UNP never took Rupavahini and SLBC to the task. Even public interest litigation (PIL) against Rupavahini and SLBC was not pursued. Ranil Wickremesinghe was subjected to vilification and black propaganda by the state

media. President Sirisena did not get a fair share of air time.

Did US Govt. contemplate unilateral sanctions against Rajapaksa regime?

Apart from UNCHR in Geneva there was also yet another possibility of unilateral US sanctions as was demonstrated against the Belarus regime. Belarus was formerly part of the Soviet Union and came under US sanctions. Belarus was not accused of war crimes but there were widespread allegations of corruption, lack of transparency, lack of judicial integrity, nepotism and cronyism.

The US was of the opinion that the Belarus system of governance was a direct threat to the US' financial system and the US Government attaches great importance to the integrity of the global financial system as it has a direct bearing on US national security. Not only would it threaten the US system but even US allies in Europe and other highly developed countries.

The majority of Sri Lankans do not understand the importance of good governance. Now we live in a globalised world where all money transactions are monitored due to terrorist financing and also where money laundering is a very serious business. The US Government has also penalised Chinese banks in the past. The US Government was able to contain the narcotics business in

Mexico and Colombia to a considerable extent through intelligence-sharing and by following the money trail.

Supremacy of US financial system

US pre-eminence in the world owes partly to the financial system and if a global partner is behaving not in accord with international norms of good governance it would threaten the US financial system.

The threat to the US financial system would come in the form of cyberattacks, money laundering, tight banking secrecy, frauds, tax evasion, etc. The most recent incident came from North Korea where SONY Entertainment was targeted. The US Government accused North Korea of hacking SONY Entertainment. In order to protect

the US financial system, the US Government must ensure that all governments in the world must demonstrate practices of good governance whereas in Sri Lanka it was far below US standards. There was a total lack of transparency on some of the key infrastructure development transactions, a breakdown in the rule of law, lack of independence of the Judiciary and the sudden and unjustified removal of the former Chief Justice Dr. Shirani Bandaranayake. These were considered as actions that demonstrate an authoritarian style of governance which is very harmful to the US financial system.

One might wonder how then US Government tolerates authoritarianism in other countries. However, in those countries, on a case by case basis, the style of authoritarianism differs and they do not face any allegations of interfering with the Judiciary, nor is there a breakdown in the rule of law.

The central thrust of the argument is that US government would not be able to conduct an investigation on its own because (1) Evidence

could not be obtained from such governments and that (2) Evidence could also be suppressed with state assistance by the cronies and that (3) The US Government cannot expect a credible investigation internally from a country with a dubious track record. (4) It can also protect criminals from justice. (5) It would then be late for the recovery effort.

A case in point is the presence of Laura Davies, Deputy High Commissioner of the British Embassy in the High Court to ensure that justice was meted out to perpetrators and also to send a strong message that the Government must ensure that judicial independence is maintained in the Khuram Shaikh case.

Why was it necessary for the British High Commission representative to be present in a court of law?

Does it not imply that there is no faith in the administration of justice in our country? The Judiciary in India is extremely strong as is the judicial activism. People's power is very strong in India solely because there is a free media and that media has not been threatened or been made to cow down. Since there is free media, it is easy to raise awareness. There are ample lessons to be learnt from Indian democracy.

How credible are the allegations of massive corrupt deals?

It is important to ponder as to why the Rajapaksa administration disliked the Right to Information Act (RTI). Karu Jayasuriya presented the RTI bill twice but the Government rejected it. The RTI laws are very much in common in many countries as it is part of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and in some international conventions such as WTO.

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WTO are stuck to. The RIT provides transparency in all Government decision-making process. A citizen has a right to know the basis on which the Government has taken a particular decision. Whether the decision-maker has taken into consideration any 'irrelevant' matters which ought not to have been taken into considerations or whether the decision-maker has omitted to take into consideration any 'relevant' matters (Wednesbury principle in administrative law) or whether the decision was based on subjective satisfaction, bias or in excess of jurisdiction. None of these are available for public scrutiny. The Rajapaksa Government maintained a tight lid on such matters and the public has been kept in the dark as to the reasons.

There have not been any public consultations as to the viability of massive infrastructure projects. There are allegations that even the Cabinet of Ministers is not aware of the Government's decisions and that decisions have been made by a handful of persons who wielded political clout in the Government. This also sent yet another message that it was useless to maintain such a huge Cabinet of ministers and that it is never consulted on important issues.

High Commissioner Nonis resigned because he fell off a chair?

It was extremely unpleasant to hear that senior officials at the highest level of Government engaged in a fracas in New York. After an internal inquiry it transpired that no one had seen the actual incident and vague and defensive answers were provided. It was mentioned at the internal inquiry that there had not been a physical assault but that High Commissioner Chris Nonis had fallen off a chair.

Can anyone believe that High Commissioner Nonis resigned because he fell off a chair? These types of questions demand that the Government spend not just 6% of GDP on education but 50 % of GDP on education.

The less money spent on education the more gullible and naïve citizens will become. The more money is spent on education the more intelligent the citizens would become hence it would be counterproductive to authoritarian regimes. When people are rendered 'naïve' and 'gullible' it would be easy to carry on with 'false patriotism', 'faulty justifications' and freely engage in complex transactions.

(This writer is a freelance journalist, a Government affairs analyst and a registered member of the American Association of Political Consultants.)

FT Quotes

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Since transparency is key to good governance, open and regular communication with stakeholders will lead the project towards its expected outcomes and deliver the purpose. Celebrating small milestones, keeping the public informed about progress achieved will build the confidence of the citizens. The right leadership, team spirit and shared vision will add additional value to the success of this historical project

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A new country in 100 days! Let's make that dream come true with the best practices in project management.

(This article is written By Dr. Madhu Fernando, PMP (USA), DBA (Australia), MEng. (Australia) Globally renowned project management expert and trainer, who has been recognised by PMI USA as one of the world's 25 most influential women in project management. After leaving her project management role at Ericsson Australia and returning home in 2002, Dr. Madhu Fernando worked as a lecturer and a course director for project management degree and post-graduate degree programs in local and foreign universities, and Chairman of Global Institute of Project Management – Project Management Campus and the CEO of 10 year old Sri Lankan-based project management consultancy Innova Strategies Ltd. Dr. Madhu can be contacted via +94 714 447 447 or madhu.fernando@innovastrategies.com.)

MORNING has broken with bright yellow sunshine warmly welcoming the new future of Sri Lanka. Hopes of a country with no ethnic divide have inspired the whole nation. I looked around to see people walking through the beautiful garden which has been recently developed to world-class standards. Despite all the beautification and infrastructural development activities carried out by the previous Government, today people have voted for the promises made for good governance.

A country free of corruption with an ethical code of conduct, the reinforcement of law and order, a new political system, unity among people from all ethnic and religious backgrounds, reduced cost of living and reasonable increases in salaries and many more positive changes, all to be introduced within a short time period of 100 days.

As a project manager, I see the 100-day work program as a challenging and strategically important project that will deliver positive results for generations to come if we take every step positively and with the right attitude. With the limited space I have here I would like to briefly share how to use project management practices, tools and techniques to achieve guaranteed success.

Significance of my views

Every little thing has a long story behind it. I grew up in a small village, completed my primary education at Korathota Sri Somananda Maha Vidyalaya until I got through my Year 5 Scholarship Exam and entered Colombo's Visakha Vidyalaya. I was lucky enough to pursue my higher education in Australia and gain my highest qualification, a Doctorate in Business Administration while working at Ericsson Australia as a Global Project Manager. For my contribution to project management I have been recognised by the PMI Project Management Institute in the US as one of the 25 most influential women in project management in 2007.

After completing my doctoral research

Deliver promise of new country in 100 days, with best practices in project management!

project on Project Management and Innovation Strategies, I arrived in Sri Lanka, in 2004, with only one aim: to inspire and advance project management in my country by establishing a PMI USA Charter in Colombo and serving as the Founder CEO. Over the years I have trained, mentored and coached more than 5000 project management enthusiasts and have made a significant contribution to my country's development.

However, it is distressing to still see that our projects are not achieving their objectives.

This article is written to help all project managers and to make at least a little contribution to the success of the 100-day work program the Government is keen to make a success.

What makes project a success?

Project management global standards organisation PMI USA defines projects as unique, temporary endeavours that create a product, service or result. The 100-day work program planned for the new country is a project by definition as it is unique and temporary.

Unique means that it is something that has never been done before and temporary means it is constrained by a time-frame, having a start date and end date. Recognising any effort as a project is the first step required in introducing a project-based management approach. By applying project management best practices, tools and techniques, the 100-day work program will benefit with better planning, smooth execution, effective monitoring and controlling, and at the end, delivering successful outcomes linked to the purpose - a new country in 100 days.

How to make the 100-day plan a success

The proposed strategies listed here are easily executable and practically proven in my life as a project manager, in delivering the expected outcome of any complex project. These simple and effective strategies are also aligned with the world's best practices in project management introduced by US- and UK-based project management global standards. I also assume that some of the activities might have already been done, as I have not been through the process of planning.

Define the scope of the 100-day work program in detail, clearly specify the goals and objectives of the project and document the complete scope of the work. If this has already been done, the next step would be breaking it down into details. When the requirements are well understood, the scope of the work must be broken down into detail with a WBS (work breakdown structure), a simple tool/ process used in project management which provides the basis for all other planning. WBS must include all the work required to complete the project successfully.

Divide Time into effort-driven tasks and allocate resources and costs for all the tasks: 100-day plan is duration-based. Turn it into an effort-driven plan without changing the end date. Allocate resources to task and plan the effort or number of work hours required for the allocated person to complete the task. Allocate costs for each task based on the required resources. The purpose of this exercise is to plan time, cost and resources accurately as detailed planning helps smooth execution and completeness of the work.

Make quality the top priority in meeting requirements. Project success is ultimately about meeting the requirement. Set matrices to measure the quality, take feedback and continuously improve.

Guest Column



By Dr. Madhu Fernando